A discourse briefly shewing the true State and Title of the Comptroller, or Postmaster generall of England, the Lord *Stanhopes* right to it, and consequently to the forraigne and Inland Letter Offices, as incident thereunto, and more plainly appeares by a Report of Sir *Robert Heath*, then his Maiesties Attorney generall: By a Verdict or Jury of 12. men in the Kings Bench, and a Report in the Commons House of Parliament, in the 4. of our Gratious Soveraigne.

12. *Novembris*, 37. *Henrici Octavi.*

THe King granted unto Sir *William Paget*, principall Secretary of State, and *John Mason* French Secretary, and the longer liver of them, an Office called, *Officium Magistri Nunciorum Cursorum sive Postarum tam infra Regnum nostrum Angliæ, quam in quibuscunque alijs partibus transmarinis in nostro dominio existentibus*, with a Pension of 66.li.13.s.4 d. *per annum*, To hold, occupie, and enjoy, by themselves, or their sufficient Deputie, or Deputies, during their owne lives, or the life of the longer liver of them, with all profits, commodities, and advantages belonging to the said Office, in such ample and large manner and forme, as Sir *Brian Tuke* Knight, or any other person, or persons in the said Office, had received or enjoyed for the execution of it.

4 *May*, 9 *Elizabethæ*. The Queene grants unto *Thomas Randolph* the same Office in these words, *Officium Magistri nunciorum & cursorum communiter vocatum Postarum nostrarum tam infra Regnum nostrum Angliæ, quam in quibuscunque alijs partibus transmarinis in Nostro Dominio existentibus*, with the same Pension of 66.li.13.s.4.d. *per annum*, to hold as aforesaid, in as ample manner and forme as *John Mason*, or any other that enjoyed the said Office, &c.

14. *Septembris* 1569. *Thomas Randolph* in vertue of the aforesaid Grant, makes a Deputation to *Rafaell Vandeput* to be the Merchant Strangers Post within the citie of London, to enjoy it with all the profits and priviledges that *Christian Susling* enjoyed.

22. *Junii* 22. *Elizabetha*, the Queene made a Grant of the ſame office unto *John* Lord *Stanhope*, in the ſame words of *Officium Magiſtri nunciorum & curſorum communiter vocatum Poſtarum noſtrarum tam infra Regnum noſtrum Anglia, quam in quibuſcunque aliis partibus tranſmarinis in noſtro dominio exiſtentibus*, with the ſame Penſion, and with all the profits, commodities, and advantages in as ample manner and forme, as Sir *John Maſon*, *Thomas Randalph*, or any body elſe who had formerly enjoyed the ſaid Office.

18. *Decembris* 1. *Jacobi & Anno Domini*, 1603. *John* Lord *Stanhope*, In vertue of the former Grant makes a Deputation unto *Mathew Dequeſter* for his life, to be the Merchant ſtrangers Poſt within the city of London, to enjoy it with all profits and privileges in as ample manner as *Raſaell Vandeput* had done before him.

25. *Julii* 5. *Jacobi*, *John* Lord *Stanhope* having ſurrendered his former Grant, the King makes a new Grant of the ſame Office, unto the ſaid *John* Lord *Stanhope*, and *Charles* his Sonne, in the very ſame words, to hold and enjoy during both their lives, & the longer liver of them by themſelves, or their ſufficient Deputie or Deputies with the ſame Penſion, and all other profits, regards, diet, commodities, and advantages belonging or pertaining unto the ſaid Office, in as ample manner and forme as Sir *John Maſon*, *Thomas Randolph*, or the ſame *John* Lord *Stanhope* himſelfe or any body elſe in the ſaid Office had formerly enjoyed.

13. *Aprill*, 17. *Jacobi*, The King (as is alleadged) erects a new Office of Poſtmaſter of England for forraine parts, out of his Majeſties Dominions, conferring it upon *Matthew Dequeſter*, the father, and *Matthew Dequeſter* the Sonne, for their lives, or the longer liver of them, with power and authoritie to themſelves, ſufficient deputie or Deputies, ſervant, or ſervants, to have the ſole taking up, ſending, or conveying of all packets and letters concerning the ſervice of us, our heires, and ſucceſſors, and of all other packets and letters, to have the nominating and appointing of Poſts and Cariers neceſſary and convenient, as well within the Realm of England, as in any forreine parts, for the conveying, exporting, and importing ſuch letters & packets,

as

as aforesaid, and from time to time demand and take for the execution of the said Office for their paines of the parties that should imploy them, all and every the like summe and summes of mony, rewards, Rates, and emolluments, respectively as then were, and afterwards should be lawfully, or usually taken, for, or in respect of doing or performing of the same or the like businesse, &c.

15. *Martii* 7. *Caroli*, The King reciting the former Patent, and taking notice that *Matthew Dequester* the sonne was dead, and *M. Dequester* the father still living, grants a Reversion of the said Office unto *William Frizell*, & M. *Thomas Witherings* for both their lives, or the longer liver of them, to beginne immediatly after the death of *Matthew Dequester* the father, and to receive the same benefits, Emollumants and rewards specified in *Dequesters* Patent aforegoing, &c.

25. *Aprilis* 13. *Caroli*, *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* was commanded to bring his Letters Patents to the Councell Table,

22. *Junii*, 13. *Caroli*, The King (as is alleadged) creates, and erects a new Office, to be called *The Letter Office of England*, declaring there should be one Officer from time to time appointed to receive, and send all Letters to and fro within his Majesties Dominions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, where the said Officer shall settle Posts, except such Letters as shall be sent by common knowne Carriers, along with their Carts, Wagons, or Pack-horses, and a letter or more sent by a Messenger on purpose, or by a friend, to have and take for Postage and conveyance thereof certaine rates therein specified: and this Office the King grants unto Master *Thomas Witherings* during his naturall life to bee exercised by himselfe, his Deputies or Assignes, and the said Master *Witherings* at the same time covenanting to pay unto certaine Postmasters of the foure principall Rodes of England, certaine summes of money amounting to 2053. li. 11. s. 4. d. according to a Schedule thereto annexed, for which summes of money they were bound to runne in post, and carrie once a weeke both inwards and outwards the Maile or Mailes of Letters without further charge and allowance.

Patent of Mr. *Witherings* a Monopoly, prohibiting all others to carry Letters but himselfe.

1. *Julii*. 13. *Caroli*, The King grants unto Sir *John Cooke*, and Sir *Francis Windebanke*, Knights, principall Secretaries of State, *Officium Magistri Nunciorum, & cursorum communiter vocatum Postarum, nostrarum infra dominica nostra*, with a Pension of 66.

li.13.s.4.d. *per annum*, and all other profits, Rights, Regards, Diets, Commodities, and advantages belonging or appertaining unto the said Office, to hold and enjoy the premises by themselves, or by their Deputie or Deputies during their lives, or the longer liver of them in the said Office of principall Secretaries of State, in as ample manner and forme as Sir *John Mason*, *Thomas Randolph*, *John* Lord *Stanhope*, or any other that formerly had or enjoyed the said Office: and further declares, that for the future, the said Office shall be joyned and annexed unto the Office or place of chiefe Secretaries of State for the time being successively, &c.

Lord *Stanhope* and his predecessors Postmasters generall of *England* for 80. yeares.

By the fore-recited Patents, it appeares how *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* and his predecessors in the Office were Controllers or Postmasters generall of England, from the 37. of *Henry* the 8. untill the 17. of King *Iames*, which is about fourescore yeares, and the deceased Lord *Stanhope* did not onely by himselfe and deputies enjoy the said Office without disturbance for thirtie yeares together, but by vertue thereof in *December* 1603, makes a Deputation unto *Matthew Dequester* for his life, to be the Merchant Strangers Post within the city of London, under whom in subordination to the L. *Stanhope* were nine other, called the forrain Posts or Curriers, who by turnes went to and fro into France, Flanders, and Holland, with all packets, and letters, both of the State, and particular Merchants, and *Matthew Dequester* continually by his place reciding at the Office in London, at the arrivall of each forreigne Post or Currier, received the Letters, and distributed them abroad unto Merchants, and likewise collecting the Merchants letters, delivered them to the Curriers to be exported, and for this labour and paines of his, had a noble a voyage of each Currier inwards, and the tenth part of all the profits outwards, the Curriers enjoying the rest themselves, and this appeares by sundry Proclamations, the originall Deputation unto *Matthew Dequester* under *John* Lord *Stanhops* hand, 18. *Decem.* 1603. *Matthew Dequesters* owne hand writing, and the deposition of thousands still living if it were needfull. *Matthew Dequester* having thus managed the Office for the forraine Letters, as deputie to the Lord *Stanhope* about 20. yeares, either out of vaine-glory, covetousnes, or some sinister respects, or other, finds means to informe the King how the Lord *Stanhops* Patent was only for services to be done in forreine parts within the Kings Dominions;

Mr. *Dequester*, Lord *Stanhopes* Deputy.

Nine Curriers or Forreigne Posts.

Dequester had only one tenth part of the fruits outwards, and a noble each voyage inwards.

Dequester betraying the Lord *Stanhope* whose servant he had beene for 20. yeares.

and

and hereupon under 13. Aprill 17. *Iacobi* the King makes a Grant unto *Mat. Dequester* the father, and *Mat. Dequester* the sonne, for their lives, or the longer liver of them to be *Postmasters of England for services to be done in forreinparts being out of his Majesties Dominions*, and by vertue thereof pretended to settle Posts and Carriers within his Majesties Dominions of England, and began effectually to carry to and fro within the Kingdome, all such Letters and Packets, as were to goe out or come from abroad, by force and vertue of the aforesaid Grant: about which time *Iohn* Lord *Stanhope* dying, *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* having notice hereof, made opposition, whereupon on the 19. of *December* 21. *Iacobi*, the King by his Letters Patents declares, that sithence the making of the said Letters Patents the 17 *Iacobi*. *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* of Harington made complaint that the said Grant unto *Dequester* did trench into the office which the said *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* held of Postmaster generall, as well within the Kingdome of England, as in whatsoever parts beyond the seas within his Majesties Dominions; his Majestie was pleased to referre the said complaint unto *William* late Earle of Penbrooke, Sir *George Calvert*, principall Secretary of State, Sir *Thomas Coventry* his Majesties Attorny Generall, and Sir *Robert Heath* his Majesties Soliciter Generall, who certified under their hands, that the said Lord *Stanhopes* Grant of Master of his Majesties Posts did extend but to such services as were to be done in the Realme of England, and others his said Majesties Dominions, and that *Dequesters* Patent extended onely to services to be done out of his Majesties Dominions; Master *Dequester* notwithstanding continuing to incroach upon the priviledges of *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* Postmaster Generall of England, and other his Majesties Dominions, the said Lord petitions King *Iames* of happy memory for leave to trie his title at Law, and having commenced a sute, after a long Evidence obtaines a Verdict in *Hillary* Terme, 22. *Iacobi* for the validitie of his owne Patent against *Dequesters*, but the said *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* being still deluded, was constrained to petition our gratious Soveraigne that now is; Copies of which Petitions, together with his Majesties Reference, and the Report thereupon, extracted from the Originall, hereafter follow.

Lord *Stanhopes* Grant extend to all services to be done within his Majesties Dominions.

Dequesters Patent extended onely to services to be done out of his Majesties Dominions.

A Verdict in the Kings Bence for the Lord *Stanhopes* Patent against *Dequester*.

To the Kings most excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* of *Harington*.

Most humbly shewing unto your most gracious Majestie,

Lord *Stanhops* Petition to the Parliament, 4. *Caroli.*

THat whereas it pleased your Majesties late Father of worthy memory, *King Iames*, to invest upon your Petitioner, and his deceased Father, *Iohn* Lord *Stanhope* of *Harington*, the Office of Postmaster generall of all his Majesties Dominions whatsoever, as well within the Realme of England, as in whatsoever place beyond the seas. And whereas your Petitioners Father did in his life time appoint one *Matthew Dequester* a Dutch man to be his Deputie for transporting and importing of letters from London, into, and from forreigne parts, which *Matthew Dequester* (taking advantage of such defects as he supposed to be in your Petitioners Patent) did fraudulently and cunningly procure a Patent from your Highnesses Father, for transporting and importing of Letters out of your Highnesse Dominions, into, and from forreigne parts, thereby supposing to deceive your Petitioner of a great part of his Office, to your Petitioners great dishonour and disgrace.

Dequesters fraudulent dealing towards his old Master.

The Title of your Petitioners Patent, It pleased your Father of famous memory, to give leave to trie at Law, as by the Petition annexed appeareth: And for as much as your Petitioner hath tried his Title at Law accordingly, and recovered his right thereby, by which the Patent of *Dequester* appeares to be void by a Jury and Verdict of twelve men, although the Judges for matter of words in the Declaration, & not for any thing in substance, have staied Judgement. May it therefore please your gratious Majestie, (notwithstanding the Verdict so passed against *Matthew Dequester* his Patent) for your Highnesse better satisfaction, that the Office is truely belonging to your Petitioner, to call before your Majestie your Atturny Generall, who can (by the Verdict recovered and recorded, and being fully acquainted in all the proceeding) truely informe your Majestie, And that two of the Judges of your Highnesse Bench, namely Justice *Dodridge*, and Justice *Whitlocke* may deliver likewise their opinions unto your Majestie for

Dequesters Patent declared void by Law.

for the clearing thereof; which being done, that your gracious Majestie would be pleased to give Order to your Sollicitor Generall to draw a Proclamation ready for your Majesties Signature, thereby commanding the said *Dequester*, and all others whom soever (except your Petitioner, and his deputies and servants under his Hand and Seale already authorized) to surcease the execution of transporting and importing of any Merchants, Tradsmen, or others your Majesties subjects Letters, from, or into the Citie of London, into, or from forreigne parts, according to such Proclamations formerly in the like kinde, and under such paines and penalties as heretofore have beene set downe in the same Proclamation,

And your Petitioner, &c.

His Majesties Reference on the said Petition.

At the Court at Whitehall, the 4. Feb. 1625.

HIs Majestie is graciously pleased, that Master Atturny Generall examine the proceedings mentioned in this Petition, and certifie his Majestie concerning the same, with his opinion of the Petitioners right, and if the Patent of *Dequesters* be void by Jury and Verdict of twelve men, and the true cause why the Judges have forborne to give Judgement, and then his Majestie will further signifie his royall pleasure.

Sir *Robert Heath* his Majesties Atturney Generall, ordered to report.

Thomas Aylesbury.

Report of Sir *Robert Heath* his Majesties Atturny Generall.

ACcording to your Majesties command, I have examined the proceedings mentioned in that Petition, and doe finde it true, That *the Office of Postmastership of England is an antient Office, that Dequester was for divers yeares Deputie under* John *Lord* Stanhope (who had this Office) for the forreigne service.

Office of Postmaster generall of *England* an ancient Office, and *Dequester* the Lord *Stanhops* Deputie.

That *Dequester* afterwards found the meanes to obtaine a Patent to himselfe of all the forreigne service, suggesting that the Lord *Stanhopes* Grants was but for all Packets of Letters within this Realme, and that your Majestie might grant another for those which should be carried out of the Realme.

Dequesters false suggestions.

That

Dequesters Patent condemned by a Verdict at Law.

That *Charles* Lord *Stanhope* now the Postmaster, brought his Action &c upon a long evidence, *Had a verdict for himself against* Dequesters *Patent*, but the Judges have not given judgement according to the verdict, for some default in the Declaration of the Plaintife, but not for any dislike of the verdict.

That above fifty Merchants trading for the Neatherlands, did certifie under their hands, the prejudice they suffer by *Dequesters* partiality, in delivering Merchant Strangers Letters (which being the intelligence of their trade) before the Letters of the English.

Lord *Stanhopes* right to the forreine businesse as Postmaster generall.

Upon which I conceive my *Lord Stanhope had right to this imployment, as incident to the place of Postmaster Generall.*

And it is the more convenient, because your Merchants desire to have a meere Englishman whom they know and trust: and if it be setled with the Lord *Stanhope* and his Deputy, *Matthew Dequester*, if he shall finde incouragement, may nevertheless bring his action, and make an experience, if upon a new tryall hee can procure a verdict for him and his title.

Ro: Heath.

NOtwithstanding this benigne Reference from his Majesty, and so ample and just a Report made by so many Honourable Personages, the power and subtilty of *Matthew Dequester* was such, as the Lord *Stanhope* was still deluded by him; Whereupon *Henry Billingsley*, Deputy to the said Lord *Stanhope*, was forced severall times to have recourse unto the Parliament, *quarto Caroli*, Copy of his second Petition being this that followes; together with an Order of the Commons House thereupon, and Report of the Committee appointed in that behalfe.

To the Honourable Assembly in the Commons House of Parliament.

The humble Petition of the Merchants of London in generall, and of Henry Billingsley *in particular.*

Pitition of Mr. *Hen. Billingsley*, Deputy to the Lord *Stanhope*. 4. *Caroli.*

Sheweth,

THat whereas your Petitioners having heretofore exhibited a Petition to the grand Committee for grievances against one *Matthew Dequester*, concerning the Postmasters office in conveighing

veighing Letters beyond the Seas; wherein is set forth the great abuse offered to your Petitioners by the said *Dequester* in the execution of the said office, a time now long since past was appointed by the Honourable Committee to heare the said cause, but by reason of many other urgent and weighty occasions, and other Petitions of grievances which had priority in the exhibition; your Petitioners complaint hath not as yet been heard, but your Petitioner *Billingsley* ever since detained a prisoner in the Marshallsea concerning that businesse.

Your Petitioners humbly pray this Honourable Assembly will vouchsafe a speciall Committee to heare their said agrievances, whereby some speedy order may bee taken for the reliefe of your Petitioners, and the discharge of the said *Billingsley* out of prison, as to your wisdome shall seem meete.

And they shall daily pray for the prosperous successe of this Honourable Assembly,

HENRY BILLINGSLEY.

Order of the Commons House upon the said Petition.

Sabat. 14. *Junii quarto Caroli.*

A Petition was this day read in the Commons House of Parliament; Exhibited in the name of Merchants of London in generall, and of *Henry Billingsley* in particular; Shewing that upon a Petition formerly exhibited to the said House against one *Matthew Dequester*, concerning the Postmasters office, in conveighing Letters beyond the Seas, and other matters in the said former Petition mentioned, a time now long since past was appointed by the grand Committee, for grievances for the hearing of the said cause, which by reason of many other weighty occasions interceding, hath not yet been heard, but the said *Billingsley* still detained a prisoner concerning the said businesse. And therefore it was humbly prayed by the said Petitioner, That a speciall Committee might be appointed by the said House, to heare the said complaint; whereupon it is ordered by the said House, that

Order of the Commons House, 4. *Caroli.*

Mr. Alderman *Molſon.*	Mr. *Oldſworth.*
Mr. Alderman *Cletherow.*	Mr. *Strode.*
Mr. *William Cunſtable.*	Mr. *Kerkeham.*
Mr. *Roydon.*	Mr. *Waller.*
Mr. *Edward Baſſe.*	Mr. *Bunch.*
Mr. *Rolles* the Lawyer.	Mr. *Rolles.*
Mr. *Earle*	Sir *Tho: Heate.*
Mr. *Matthewes.*	Sir *Tho. Steward.*
Mr. *Ginner.*	Mr. *Lawley.*
Mr. *Barker.*	Sir *Edward Giles.*
Mr. *Sherwell.*	Mr. *Doughtie.*

ſhall take conſideration of the cauſe contained in the ſaid Petitions, and for that purpoſe are to meet on Munday next, at two of the Clock in the afternoone, in the Exchequer Chamber, and *Matthew Dequeſter*, and all other perſons whom this buſineſſe concerneth, are to have notice given of the ſaid time and place, and the ſaid *Matthew Dequeſter* is then to bring with him his Letters Patents concerning the ſaid office, and the ſaid parties may be then heard with their Counſell if they thinke fit.

This Committee having taken information of the buſineſſe, declared how *Dequeſter* procured his Patent from the King by untrue ſuggeſtions, and that the impriſonment of *Billingſley* by *Dequeſter* was uniuſt, the rather in regard a verdict at Law had paſſed againſt the ſaid *Dequeſter* therein, as more at large in the Report it ſelfe, which followes.

Martis 24. *Junii* 4. *Caroli.*

Report of the Committee, 4. *Caroli.* Declare *Dequeſter* to have beene the Lord *Stanhop's* Deputie procures a Patent upon untrue ſuggeſtions.

REport was this day made from the Committee appointed to conſider of the Petition exhibited unto this Houſe by *Henry Billingſley*, againſt a Patent lately obtained by *Matthew Dequeſter*, for the ſole carrying of all Letters beyond the Seas, and from thence into this Kingdome; upon which Report it appeared, that the ſaid *Matthew Dequeſter* had for many yeares together carryed Letters beyond the Seas, and from thence hither, by vertue of a deputation to him therein made by the Lord *Stanhope*, Poſtmaſter of England, and having ſo done, did lately *upon ſome untrue ſuggeſtions procure to himſelf the ſaid Patent* from his Maieſty,

and

and then opposed the Patent of Postmaster granted to the said Lord *Stanhope*, by force whereof himselfe had long time taken upon him the carriage of such Letters. And it further appeared that the said *Dequester* had abused his said Patent in the execution thereof, to the great preiudice of the English Merchants, who being by him restrained from sending or receiving their Letters by any other Post but himselfe, and having cut up some Packets of Letters sent by the Merchants by other Post, did himselfe, being an Alien borne, deliver the Letters of the merchant Strangers before the English, to their great damage, and likewise exacted money from the English merchants, besides the due fee, before they could get their Letters. And that the said *Dequester* procured the said Petitioner *Billingsley*, deputed by the said Lord *Stanhope* to carry the said Letters, to be imprisoned for carrying thereof; which imprisonment the Committee conceived to be unjust; the rather because *a verdict at Law hath passed against the said Dequester therein*. Whereupon it is declared and adiudged by the said House of Commons, that the said Patent so granted to the said *Dequester* is a grievance in the execution. And it is further ordered, that the said Committee shall frame and tender to the House a Petition to be presented to his Maiesty, for the inlargement of the said *Billingsley* out of prison, where hee hath been imprisoned by the space of thirteen weekes. And are to meet at seaven of the Clock to morrow morning in the Court of Wards.

A gainst Dequester

P^o. *E. Brighte.*

THus was the Patent of *Dequester* on all sides found uniust, and the Honourable House of Commons having then declared and adiudged the same a grievance, would no doubt have put the Lord *Stanhope* againe in possession, had not that Parliament been unhappily dissolved within two dayes after the said Report was made.

But *Dequester*, though incessantly opposed by so much right and reason, did so often imprison *Billingsley*, and perplexe him otherwise, as was his utter undoing in the end, and by that meanes continued by himselfe the execution of his unduly got Patent, till the 20. of *Febr.* 1631. which was twelve yeares: and it is remarkable, that *Dequester* during all the time, did neither more nor lesse about Services to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions, which was the Tenure of the Kings immediate Grant unto himselfe, than what he did before as Deputy to the Lord *Stanhope* for twenty yeares together.

But now under the 20. of *Febr.* 1631. as aforesaid, *Matthew Dequester* makes a deputation of his forraine Postmastership *concerning services to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions* unto Mr. *Thomas Witherings*, with all rights and priviledges thereunto belonging, and then Covenants, that if he the said Mr *Thomas Witherings*, or his Assignes, or any other, shall obtain a new Patent of [illegible] forraine Posts and Curriers shall be cor

and the ſaid Mr. *Witherings* thereby alſo promiſes, that the number of the ſaid nine Curriers ſhall not be encreaſed, but by him continued as then they were, with all the priviledges and benefits they then uſually enjoyed.

Mr. *Witherings* by vertue of this deputation from *Dequeſter*, and the reverſion granted *Frizell* and himſelfe, the 15. of March following, 7. *Coroli*, being in poſſeſſion and exerciſe of the forraigne buſineſſe, continued to make uſe of theſe nine forraigne Poſts or Curriers ſome few moneths only, and then turned them all out of their imployment and office which they had purchaſed for their lives, and Mr. *Witherings* himſelf covenanted with *Dequeſter* as aforeſaid, to keep them in, by which device of his, he comes to enjoy the whole fruits of the forraigne office himſelfe, who before was to have had not above the twentieth part, the other nineteene parts being divided betwixt theſe nine Curriers, who by this proiect may have ſuffered already about twenty thouſand pounds ſterling.

And if it be alleadged, as it may truly, that the ſaid forraign Letters go now more ſpeedily and orderly by this way of Stasfetta then formerly; yet it is as eaſily replyed, that though the good of the weale publique be in no kinde to be omitted, nor advancement of the office neglected, that in ſuch caſe the improvement of the office ſhould be alike to all the intereſſed, and not ſome all, ſome none at all, eſpecially in this caſe of the forraigne Curriers, who equally with Mr. *Witherings* had their offices for their lives, and better title derived from the Lord *Stanhope*; Whereas Mr. *Witherings* his was only from *Matthew Dequeſter* by deputation, or what *Dequeſter* had in reverſion.

The Lord *Stanhope* and his Deputies being thus outed of their profits and employment about forraine ſervices which their Predeceſſors Poſtmaſters generall of England had for above foureſcore yeares together enioyed uncontrollably, did ſtill continue to carry to and fro within the Kingdomes, all packets of letters both of State and Subiects which were brought unto them for ſuch rates and benefits as was agreed between the parties, every man being free to ſend his Letters by whom he would, and to pay as little as he could; and thus it continued till a little before 1637. 22. *Junii*, 13. *Caroli*, at which time Mr. *Witherings* upon miſinformation obtaines a grant from the King, whereby he ſince pretends to carry all Letters himſelfe, which how far it entrenches upon the freemans liberty, will no doubt be duly weighed and conſidered of by the Parliament.

Matthew Dequeſter 17. of King *James*, upon the obtaining to be Poſtmaſter of England, for ſervices to be done out of his Maieſties Dominions, alleadged in his owne Patent, that the Lord *Stanhopes* grant was of ſervice to be done within his Maieſties Dominions only, and ſo was content to let the Lord *Stanhope* have the inland buſineſſe, which ſhewed at leaſt he had ſome conſcience, and would tell truth, though not the whole truth [illegible]

buſineſſe, by the ſame Law, and with as much equity, did Mr. *Witherings* turne his officers and his deputies out of the inland buſineſſe, and yet both by *Dequeſter* and Mr. *Witherings* acknowledged to be poſtmaſter generall of England, and all other his Maieſties Dominions.

The Lord *Stanhope* thus knowne to be poſtmaſter of England, beſides the continuall practice and preſcription of his predeceſſors, for foureſcore yeares together, the very title and ſound of poſtmaſter generall of England is ſufficient to tell every one, that he and his deputies are they that ſhould likely take charge and carry the Letters to and fro, ſo long as they are in England: And *Matthew Dequeſter in his ſecond Patent, 17. Jacobi, confeſſed himſelfe to be Poſtmaſter for ſervices only to be done out of England, and that the Lord* Stanhopes *grant and his were of diſtinct places, one within his Majeſties Dominions, the other without his Majeſties Dominions*, and yet he by vertue of this Patent for forraigne ſervices, and thoſe to be done out of his Maieſties Dominions, where the King had no power to grant a priviledge, did totally abridge the Lord *Stanhope* and his deputies from medling within the Kings Dominions with any packets of Letters either of King or Subiect, which came from abroad into England, or went out of England into forraine parts.

Dequeſters ſeſſion of Lord *Stan* Patent.

Againe Mr. *Witherings* will not deny the Lord *Stanhope* to be poſtmaſter generall of England, and the Poſts of England to be his deputies, at leaſt he pretends not to be ſuch himſelfe, and yet conſtrained the poſts upon all the Rodes to carry his Mailes of Letters, ſuffering no body elſe to carry Letters but theſe poſts deputies to the Lord *Stanhope*, and appropriated the whole benefit unto himſelfe, without the leaſt acknowledgement unto the Lord *Stanhope*, or notice of the poſts his deputies, unleſſe it were to turne ſome of them out of their places, make others pay a ſecond fine, and reduce the wages of the reſt from above 4000.li. *per annum*, to 2053. li. beſides the want of their arreares, being many thouſand pounds, to the utter undoing of many families, as in their own Remonſtrance more at large appeares.

Mr. *Wither* oppreſſion the inland Poſts.

But beſides the invalidity of Mr. *Witherings* his patent derived from *Dequeſter*, which ſo plainly trenches upon the Lord *Stanhope*, who by that meanes was illegally put out of his poſſeſſion, Mr. *Witherings* was further accuſed of ſundry miſdemeanours; as firſt, opening of packets and letters: 2. Not adviſing the Kings Miniſters the receipt of their letters in due time. 3. Exaction of greater poſtage of letters. 4. Exportation, or conniving at exportation of gold and goods unaccuſtomed, under colour of his office. 5. Not ſuffering the officers to ſearch his paſſage boate. 6. Not holding correſpondency with forraine poſtmaſters for want of languages. 7. Not payment of duties to forraine poſtmaſters. 8. Miſdemenours of his deputies and ſervants in both of-

Mr. *Wither* ſeverall miſ demeanour

Mailes for nothing. 13. Detaining ſome mens Letters longer then others. 14 Refuſing to ſend away the Kings packets. 15. In making a Monopoly of his patent, by the ill execution of it. And laſt, of his not diſcharging of the truſt the King repoſed in him for execution of the ſaid offices, and although all theſe reaſons were not ſpecified in the ſequeſtration, together with the nullity of *Dequeſter* and Maſter *Witherings* his patent, by a verdict in the Kings Bench, and the Committees Report to the Commons Houſe of Parliament, 4. *Caroli*, a reference to two Honourable perſonages, and his Majeſties Atturney, and Soliciter generall, the oppreſſion of the 9. forraine poſts, oppreſſion of all the inland poſts, Carriers, Wagons, foot-poſts, and others impriſoned and undone by Mr. *Witherings*, yet his Maieſty his privy Counſell, and the Secretaries of State were made therewith acquainted, as doth appeare by the originall petitions, and ſundry paſſages at Counſell Table, how theſe were joyntly a meanes with thoſe declared therein, to bring on the ſequeſtration, which could not well have been deferred any longer : 1. Becauſe the objections againſt Mr. *Witherings* were many. 2. Of a high and heinous nature. 3. In regard that offices of this kinde have a tacite condition and obligation annexed unto them of the officers good behaviour, and due performance, the failing wherein becomes a forfeiture, *Ipſo facto*, and 4. Becauſe the King was then upon departure for the North, and for good government of his owne affaires, and better uſage of his ſubjects, both which were more liable to ſuffer in his Majeſties abſence, yet was it not intended that Mr. *Witherings* ſhould be outed quite without a faire and legall triall, for at the ſame time the King gave order (as appeares) for a Bill to be put againſt him in Starchamber, the fruits of the offices being only retained in *de poſito* for him, till he make good his Titile, and cleare himſelfe of the miſdemeanours he was accuſed of, ſome whereof are iuſtified in the Houſe of Commons, and at a Committee, and others, too tedious for this diſcourſe, will likewiſe be made appeare when the Committee pleaſes but to give leave ; Yet ſince Mr *Whitherings* is on a ſudden ſo importunate of diſpatch, to give a touch hereof in briefe may perhaps, being ſuddenly diſperſed, more ſpeedily informe the Honourable Court of Parliament, and ſave them many a tedious and troubleſome ſitting.

That Letters have beene opened, quite miſcarried, and ſome mens longe detained than others, is proved in the Houſe, partly *viva voce*, and partly b ſeverall Letters, and a Petition from the Engliſh Merchants living in Italy Now ſince, all this and much more may be done by M. *Witherings* in ſuc manner, as will be impoſſible to be proved againſt him, that is, when there i no witneſſe by, in like caſes to prevent inconveniences, ſuch proofes are accepted of, as can be had, which in this caſe muſt bee by obliging Mr. *Witherin*

Witherings should have writ to the Postmaster of Antwerpe, Venice, Mantua, or from whence they came, and that said Postmaster was to cleare himselfe for sending letters open, which diligence if Mr. *Witherings* cannot prove to have done so often as letters came open, he is to be charged with the opening of them himselfe, otherwise he may open them all, and as often as he please, and say he received them so from the Postmaster of Antwerp, and the Postmaster of Anwerp may open them at Antwerpe, and say it was the Postmaster of England, and so the whole world be continually abused by a couple of Postmasters, there being no other possibility of redresse.

In like manner totall concealing, or detaining some mens letters longer then other some, falls flat upon Mr. *Witherings*, thus; All Letters directed from London to Venice, Mantua, Antwerp, or any other place, should be made up together by themselves in a bundle, and sealed with the Postmasters knowne seale, and from thence to London reciprocally; and if the severall bundles come thus to hand, sealed up, then will all letters of one date come together, and not miscarry, or be delaied; but if they come open, or sealed with a strange seale, then is Mr. *Witherings* to make the severall Postmasters respectively to cleare themselves; which diligence since Mr. *Witherings* proves not to have used, nor made a Role or Inventory of all letters, as he was commanded by his Majestie and privie Counsell, and practised by his predecessors, all miscarriage, and detaining some mens letters longer then others, must light upon Mr. *Witherings*, otherwise he and such Postmasters may delude the whole world, in quite concealing or longer withholding of their letters, just as in opening them at his pleasure, as aforesaid. But it is proved in the House, and acknowledged that Mr. *Witherings* did not seale up the Portmantle according to order of his Majestie, and Counsell Table, but left it open, by which meanes gold was conveied out of the Kingdome, as it is proved in the Honourable House of Commons, and the leaving open the Mailes, flatly signifies some such ill intent, or a most notorious carelesnesse, and neglect, in that the portmantle being open, as Mr. *Witherings* used to send it, every rascall postilion boy, or other, that had the said portmantle in his power, might be invited or inveigled to convey away his Maiesties packets, or fill his pockets with letters worth five or tenne pounds, or what he pleased, and deliver them to any Marriner or passenger in the packet Boat which went to Callis or Dunkerke, whether the said letters were directed, the said Marriners or passenger might deliver them as well as the postmaster himselfe, and receive the ready money for them; now were it not that Mr. *Witherings* was contented to endanger his Maiesties packets and affaires, and run an imminent hazard of his owne losse, contrary to his Maiesties command, through the expectation of a farre greater unlawfull gain by transportation of gold, and other prohibited and unaccustomed goods, which is as well proved against him, as such deeds of darkenesse can well bee, then

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him altogether incapable to execute an Office of ſuch truſt and conſequence.

Beſides Mr. *Witherings* his refuſall to ſend his Majeſties packets, was ſo evident, as being but conſidered of, may chance make it a leſſer evill, that Mr. *Witherings* his Offices (if his they be) be depoſited (though otherwiſe illigally) in ſuch hands as know better how to mannage them for him then himſelfe, rather then his Majeſties packets ſhould not be ſent away, till Mr. *Witherings* had been convicted by a two or three termes ſute at Law, in which interim the affaires of King and State might have ſuffered irreparably.

It is then humbly motioned unto the Honorable Committee, that though all the reaſons here mentioned, with ſome others, were not ſpecified in the ſequeſtration, ſince really they were motives thereunto, and well hoped by ſuch as it concernes, that it will be found both juſt and equitable, eſpecially with this ſupreme Court of equity, that thoſe together with the reſt be all examined before the ſequeſtration be removed.

But if Mr. *Witherings* doe ſtill perſiſt declining the triall of his Patent, and the examination of his miſdemeanours, exagerating his illegall putting out, and importuning for a repoſſeſſion, in caſe this Honorable Committee ſhould be inclined thereto, may they pleaſe onely to reflect upon, how the Lord *Stanhope* (whoſe predeceſſours enjoyed theſe Offices for foureſcore yeares, as is notorious to all the world) had the Broad Seal of England likewiſe, was put out of poſſeſſion illegally, & that the ſame Law which M. *Witherings*, implores to put him in again, may be thought inclinable to repoſſeſſe the Lord *Stanhope* firſt, the rather in regard, that if the Lord *Stanhope* had not beene firſt turned out illegally Mr. *Witherings* had never come in at all, as alſo becauſe there is no Petition beſides the Lord *Stanhopes* before this Honorable Court, which layes claim to either forrain or Inland Office, unleſſe the Earle of Warwicks, a Copy of whoſe Deputation, in ſuch caſe we humbly crave, and a competent time to anſwer to it, ſince the Lord *Stanhops*, and the Poſtmaſters petitions have beene put in theſe twelve moneths, and the Earle of Warwicks not full twelve dayes ſince, which being but once taken notice of, we doe not onely hope, but reſt aſſured it may ſtand with the Juſtice and Equity of this Supreme Aſſembly, to grant us our requeſt, whereunto we muſt ſubmit our ſelves howſoever.

FINIS.